

Smallpox Exposure Extended and Short Messages

Health and Safety Information for the First Hours

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Grade Level: 8.6

Smallpox Exposure Extended Message

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What is happening?

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Please pay careful attention to this message to help protect your health and the health of others.
- Public health officials believe there may be a case of smallpox in the *xxx area*. Since we have not seen any naturally occurring cases of smallpox since 1977, a confirmed case would mean that the virus that causes smallpox has been deliberately released.
- At this time, we do not know the extent or source of the smallpox release. Local, state and federal officials, including public health and law enforcement, are working together to find these answers. They will make updated announcements as soon as they learn more.
- Smallpox is a serious, life-threatening disease. It is caused by infection with a virus (variola virus). This virus can spread from person to person.
- Smallpox disease causes people to have a high fever, body aches and sometimes vomiting, followed by a distinctive skin rash. Most people develop symptoms within 7 to 17 days after being exposed to the virus.
- If you live in the *xxx area* or think you might have been exposed to smallpox, call your local public health department at *xxx-xxx-xxxx* or your doctor immediately, even if you don't feel sick, and avoid contact with other people.
- There is an effective vaccine that can help prevent smallpox and there is enough vaccine to give to everyone who needs it.
- Health officials are working to identify anyone else who might have been exposed to the virus so they can be offered vaccination.
- HHS is working hard to respond to this outbreak. Stay informed and follow instructions of health officials, to help protect you, your family and the community against this public health threat.
- Stay informed by turning to the radio, television, or Internet news for updated health and safety announcements from public health officials.

- For more information about smallpox, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) smallpox page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.
- This message contains important information that can help you take steps to protect your health and the health of others.

What is smallpox and can it spread from person to person?

- Smallpox is a serious, sometimes fatal disease caused by infection with variola virus.
- Variola virus can be spread from person to person. The virus is spread principally through the respiratory droplets from a sick person sneezing or coughing. Usually, this occurs through direct close contact with a sick person, within about 6 feet. It can also be spread by touching contaminated objects, such as bedding.

How is smallpox prevented and treated?

- There are no medications to cure smallpox.
- Medical care can help manage some of the symptoms of smallpox, but smallpox can still be life-threatening.
- There is a vaccine for smallpox. When given before exposure to the smallpox virus, it can prevent the disease. When given within several days of an exposure to the virus, the vaccine may prevent a person from developing smallpox, or it may at least lessen the severity of disease.

What are the symptoms of smallpox?

- Symptoms usually appear 7 to 17 days after people become infected with the virus.
- The first symptoms include a high fever, head and body aches, tiredness, and sometimes vomiting.
- Two to four days after the first symptoms, a rash of small red spots begins, often on the tongue and in the mouth. The spots then develop into sores that break open. Around this time, a rash also begins to appear on other parts of the body, starting on the face and spreading to the arms, legs, hands, feet.
- As a general rule, people can't get smallpox from a sick person until they have a rash.

What to do if you have symptoms of smallpox

- If you have symptoms of smallpox, call the local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx or your doctor immediately. They will give you information on how and where to get help.
- Until you can get medical help, stay away from others to avoid spreading the disease to them.

What to do if you think you might have been exposed to smallpox

- If you were in the xxx area where smallpox was reported, you may have had contact with variola virus. You may also have been exposed to the virus if you have been in close contact with someone who has the symptoms of smallpox.
- Even if you don't feel sick, call your doctor or local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx. They will give you information on how and where to get help. Explain that you do not have symptoms, but you believe you may have had contact with variola virus.

- If someone in your house becomes sick, separate them from the rest of the household. Clean all bedding and clothing used by that person with bleach and hot water. Clean contaminated surfaces with disinfectants, such as bleach.
- If you may have been exposed to smallpox, health officials may want to give you the vaccine to help prevent or lessen the effects of the illness.

What to do if you are concerned about smallpox but don't believe you have been exposed

- It is natural to be concerned or afraid at a time like this. It is important to stay informed and follow the instructions of public health officials. This will help you stay as safe and healthy as possible.
- To avoid getting sick, stay away from people with smallpox symptoms.
- Listen for announcements from public health officials about what areas to avoid and for how long.
- In addition, listen to announcements regarding vaccination clinics to find out if you should go, where you should go, what information you need to bring, and when the clinics will be open.
- When you go to a vaccination clinic you may be asked to bring:
 1. Photo identification (driver's license, company badge)
 2. Medical records (i previous vaccines received, current medications, chronic illness, including skin conditions and allergies)

What is being done and how to get more information

- Health officials will set up vaccination clinics to help protect those who might have been exposed to the virus. HHS is prepared for this event and there is enough vaccine for everyone who needs it.
- Federal, state, and local health officials are working together to help stop the spread of this disease. They are identifying, vaccinating, and isolating people who have symptoms or may have had contact with a sick person. These methods successfully wiped out smallpox decades ago.
- Public health officials will share information about the outbreak as it becomes available. This includes areas where smallpox cases have been found, who to call and where to go for help if you think you have been exposed to smallpox.
- If you stay informed and follow the instructions of health officials, we will have the best chance of protecting you, your family and the community against this public health threat.
- HHS is working hard to respond to this outbreak. Stay informed and follow instructions of health officials to help protect you, your family and the community against this public health threat.
- Stay informed by turning to the radio, television, or Internet news for updated health and safety announcements.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information about smallpox, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the CDC's smallpox page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.

Grade Level: 11.3

Smallpox Exposure Short Message

Health and Safety Information for the First Hours

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- Public health officials believe there may be a case of smallpox in the *xxx area*. Since we have not seen any naturally occurring cases of smallpox since 1977 a confirmed case would mean that the virus that causes smallpox has been deliberately released.
- At this time, we do not know the extent or source of the release. Local, state and federal officials, including public health and law enforcement, are working together to find these answers. They will make updated announcements as soon as they learn more.
- Smallpox is a serious, life-threatening disease caused by infection with a virus (variola virus). This virus can spread from person to person. Smallpox disease causes people to have a high fever, body aches and sometimes vomiting and then a distinctive skin rash. Most people develop symptoms 7 to 17 days after being exposed to the virus.
- If you live in the *xxx area* or think you might have been exposed to smallpox, call your local public health department at *xxx-xxx-xxxx* or your doctor immediately, even if you don't feel sick and avoid contact with other people.
- There is an effective vaccine that can help prevent smallpox and there is enough vaccine to give to everyone who needs it.
- Health officials are working to identify anyone else who might have been exposed to the virus so they can be tested and treated.
- If you live in *xxx area* have symptoms, stay away from others and call your public health department or doctor for information on where to go for medical care.
- HHS is working hard to respond to this outbreak. Stay informed and follow instructions of health officials, to help protect you, your family and the community against this public health threat.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information about smallpox, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the CDC's smallpox page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.